

## University of Groningen

### Polysemy and dissemination

Evink, C.E.

*Published in:*  
Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology

**IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.**

*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Publication date:*  
2012

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*  
Evink, C. E. (2012). Polysemy and dissemination. *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 43(3), 264-284.

#### Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

#### Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

*Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.*

# POLYSEMY AND DISSEMINATION<sup>1</sup> EDDO EVINK

If one makes a comparison between hermeneutics and deconstruction, the first thing that needs to be recognized is the great number of agreements: interpretation is seen by both as starting with a preliminary projection or design that develops possibilities within a text; all designs of a text are contextually determined, historical and finite; author and addressee are both absent in the text; the text develops its own history through its interpretations – and so on. But usually the relation between hermeneutics and deconstruction is depicted as an opposition between identity and difference: hermeneuticians like Gadamer and Ricoeur are supposed to be striving for unity, understanding and truth, whereas Derrida and other so-called ‘deconstructivists’ draw attention to difference, otherness, interruptions and aporias that cannot be identified within the hermeneutic circle. There are several strategies to discuss the similarities and differences between hermeneutics and deconstruction.<sup>2</sup> Derrida has often described this distinction as one between polysemy and dissemination: polysemy being the effort to maintain the many meanings of one word within the extensive framework of the hermeneutic circle and the hermeneutic horizon, while dissemination is the force that inevitably breaks through this circle. Polysemy and dissemination are thus presented as two different strategies to deal with the plurality of meanings in language.

This article discusses the relation between polysemy and dissemination by focusing on the way Paul Ricoeur and Jacques Derrida actually use these terms. Since in Derrida’s comments on polysemy and dissemination the notion of horizon plays an important role, this concept will be discussed as well. Two questions are at stake here: what do Ricoeur and Derrida mean by these terms: polysemy, dissemination and horizon? And are their approaches really incompatible? First, Ricoeur’s views on polysemy and the hermeneutical horizon will be outlined (§§ 1 and 2), then Derrida’s alternative approach will be sketched (§ 3) and critically discussed by taking a closer look at a few of his arguments (§ 4); finally, conclusions will be drawn with regard to the relation between polysemy and dissemination, as well as hermeneutics and deconstruction (§ 5).

## *Ricoeur on polysemy*

Paul Ricoeur regularly uses the term polysemy, mainly to refer to the range of meanings that a specific term under discussion or analysis can have. Only rarely does he discuss polysemy itself. The most detailed analysis of this notion can be found in ‘The Problem of Double Meaning as Hermeneutic Problem and

as Semantic Problem’.<sup>3</sup> In this text Ricoeur approaches the question of double meaning or multiple meanings in an interdisciplinary manner, combining structuralist linguistics and hermeneutics. He makes a distinction between, on the one hand, two levels of structuralist studies of linguistics and, on the other hand, hermeneutic interpretation: lexical semantics, structural semantics and hermeneutics. Lexical semantics operates on the level of words; structural semantics on the level of combinations of words, e.g., oppositions, conjunctions and disjunctions; hermeneutics on the level of language use in texts. Only within the domain of lexical semantics is the phenomenon of multiple meanings elaborated by Ricoeur with the help of the notion of polysemy. In the other two fields, structural semantics and hermeneutics, he prefers to speak of symbolism.<sup>4</sup>

Ricoeur draws the term polysemy from Stephen Ullmann, who, in his *The Principles of Semantics*, places polysemy in a scale of appearances of sense multiplicity.

From the strictly synchronistic point of view, several phenomena totally different in character are related to the multiplicity of senses. As usual, it is easy to set up clear-cut types but impossible to establish sharp demarcation-lines. The three cardinal types may be aligned in the following arrangement:

1. Several aspects of one sense: *shifts in application*; e.g. ‘healthy climate’—‘healthy complexion’.
2. Several senses of one word: *polysemy*; e.g. ‘human head’—‘head of department’—‘bridge-head’.
3. Several words: *homonymy*; e.g. ‘sea’—‘to see’—‘a see’.<sup>5</sup>

Polysemy, according to Ullmann, “...in synchronistic terms, [...] means that *one word can have more than one sense*.”<sup>6</sup> The contexts of speech determine which meaning is at stake in singular language use. The larger the differences in meaning, the more important these contexts become in determining meaning; in the words of Ullmann, they “canalize meaning.”<sup>7</sup> But contextuality is not the only factor. An important characteristic of polysemy is that the several meanings of the same word do not only have different references, but also intend each other.<sup>8</sup> The different references are thus still linked to each other, e.g., in the different meanings of ‘head’ or ‘operation’ – in fact this is an important difference between polysemy and homonymy. In addition, Ullmann underlines that the frontiers between these three stages are never clear-cut and sometimes even fluid; one can change into the other.<sup>9</sup> All these features together show the importance of a diachronic approach, without which the synchronic phenomenon of polysemy cannot be understood.<sup>10</sup> For the scope of this article, it suffices to conclude at this point that, in Ullmann’s linguistics, the contexts of language use have a double function with regard to polysemy: on the one hand, they canalize and limit the proliferation of meaning by polysemy; on the other hand, they are an important source of polysemy, because the actual use of language can produce a new meaning.

Most of what Ricœur writes on polysemy is in line with Ullmann's linguistics, although he prefers to work with the linguistic distinctions and terminology of de Saussure and Jakobson. Like Ullmann, he makes a distinction between a synchronic [*langue*] and a diachronic [*parole*] approach of double meaning. Polysemy is defined by Ricœur as, strictly speaking, a synchronic concept: within a certain language system the same word can have different meanings. The word 'bar', e.g., can mean tavern, block, barrier, stick (wooden stick, chocolate stick), and so on.<sup>11</sup> From a diachronic point of view the double meaning can be seen as a change of meaning or transference of meaning. One needs both perspectives to reach the right view on the multiple meanings within a lexical level: "...for the changes in meaning have their synchronic projection in the phenomenon of polysemy..."<sup>12</sup> Every study of the 'mechanism of language' performs its task, according to Ricœur, in between these two levels. Comparable relations come to the fore in other Saussurian distinctions, between the language system and spoken language, and between associative and syntagmatic combinations of signs.<sup>13</sup> In all these relations the former part is the level on which polysemy can be discerned, whereas the latter part functions on the level where polysemy is taken up in the working of symbolism. The level of polysemy is portrayed by Ricœur as static and closed within its own system, while the level of symbolism is more dynamic and open to the development of new meanings in the actual use of language. Polysemy, therefore, cannot be understood from the perspective of the language system only. It is the static projection of a dynamic change and development of meanings. In general, according to Ricœur, the systematic rules of language should never be studied exclusively, but always in relation to actual language use. This is a recurrent point of view in his discussions of structuralism and hermeneutics.<sup>14</sup>

Paradoxically, however, if it was left to itself, polysemy would be able to develop an infinite range of meanings, even until words tend to be meaningless. Probably there is no inherent limit to the possible expansion of significations of a word:

It is at the level of the mechanism of language [i.e., in between the two levels of synchrony and diachrony, E.E.] that the rule of ordered polysemy, which is that of ordinary language, is discovered. This phenomenon of ordered or limited polysemy is at the crossroads of two processes: the first originates in the sign, considered as 'accumulative intention'. Left to itself, it is a process of expansion which continues to the point of a surplus charge of meaning (overflow), as we see in certain words which, because they signify too many things, cease to signify anything, or in certain traditional symbols which have taken on so many contradictory values that they tend to neutralize one another (the fire that burns and warns, the water that both quenches thirst and drowns).<sup>15</sup>

But there are external limits that change this boundless polysemy to a 'restricted' or 'regulated' polysemy. Ricœur mentions two restrictions. On the one hand there are semantic fields – a notion that he derives from Jost Trier<sup>16</sup> – that structure the semantic use of words by relating them to each other. These

semantic fields confine the 'cumulative intention' of words, without restricting them to just one meaning. 'Operation', e.g., in the meaning of 'medical treatment', also refers to other sorts of 'operation', like military or other strategic operations. Another limit is given by the contexts of language use. The use of language in speech and writing always takes place in a specific context, thereby choosing one meaning (or more meanings, as we will see) of the range of possible meanings of a word. Going back to the example of the word 'bar', when I say "let's go to the bar and have a drink", it is clear what kind of bar I mean. In fact, the semantic fields can be taken as projections of language use with several simultaneous meanings on the linguistic system:

ordered polysemy is properly a meaning effect produced in discourse. When I speak, I realize only a part of the potential signified; the rest is erased by the total signification of the sentence, which operates as the unit of speaking. But the rest of the semantic possibilities is not canceled; they float around the words as possibilities not completely eliminated. The context thus plays the role of filter.<sup>17</sup>

Again we see here that the sifting of meanings by the context does not entirely take away the other meanings. They keep floating around. And it also occurs that several meanings of one word are at work in the same context at the same time. Actually, Ricœur has taken here the step from polysemy to symbolism:

It happens, however, that a sentence is constructed so that it does not succeed in reducing the potential meaning to a monosemic usage but maintains or even creates a rivalry among several ranges of meaning. Discourse can, by various means, realize ambiguity, which thus appears as the combination of a lexical fact – polysemy – and a contextual fact – the possibility allowed to several distinct or even opposed values of a single name to be realized in the same sequence.<sup>18</sup>

If we take a look at the same example again, with the sentence "let's go to the bar and have a drink", I may mean a bar in a hotel, a bar outside of a hotel, or maybe even the minibar in my hotel room. The latter meaning would be a joke of course, but it is a possible meaning of the phrase.

When Ricœur writes of 'restricted' or 'regulated' polysemy, one might wonder who regulates here and if it is really accurate to speak of regulation. There are no strict rules to the way the context deals with the potential meanings of an utterance. And if we can speak of rules here, these rules are happily trespassed in sentences with an equivocal meaning, like jokes, irony, metaphors, and so on. This is exactly the innovative and imaginative use of language Ricœur is interested in and that he tries to understand: the working of symbolism.

In order to approach this symbolism with scientific rigour, he examines its linguistic apparatus, making use of structuralist linguistics, but at the same time assigning it its restricted place. Structuralist linguistics studies the linguistic system as a closed system, without looking at its references to the reality outside of language. The linguistic structures cannot be understood as strictly autonomous, they are the sediments of actual language use. Linguistic analysis

of this systematic residue is illuminating, but it has a price, "the price of keeping the analysis within the enclosure of the linguistic universe."<sup>19</sup> Within this closed universe, however, the effects of polysemy seem to be boundless. The effects are decreased once the analysis has been opened up to the level of speech and writing. Here, in linguistic invention and imagination, we find the source of the multiple meanings of language of which polysemy is the sedimentation.

The question arises, however, what causes the limitless expansion of meaning, if the closed synchronic semantic realm of signs is dependent on active language use for its renewal and development. If the innovating imagination of language use is restricted or even regulated by the context in which it takes place, where does the infinity of possible meanings come from? Perhaps polysemy has its origin not only in language use, leaving its sediments in the language system, but also in the system itself. This is suggested by Ricoeur, when he writes that the limitless process of meaning expansion "...first originates in the sign."<sup>20</sup> Another explanation might be that the restrictions and regulations of polysemy are not that strong, as is already suggested by the occurrence of ambiguity and symbolism. Polysemy is not as ordered and limited as Ricoeur seems to think. Now, if polysemy is the sedimentation of innovative use of language, then the limitless expansion of meaning might be seen as the sedimentation of the lack of boundaries in this innovative language use. This gives hermeneutics an opening on to dissemination.

#### *Ricoeur on the hermeneutic horizon*

As we have seen, in 'The Problem of Double Meaning', Ricoeur makes a clear distinction between the levels of linguistics and hermeneutics. Hermeneutics studies the actual use of language and its results, analyzing language on the level of sentences and texts, and thereby breaking out of the closed system of signs:

In hermeneutics there is no closed system of the universe of signs. While linguistics moves inside the enclosure of a self-sufficient universe and encounters only intrasignificant relations [...] hermeneutics is ruled by the open state of the universe of signs.<sup>21</sup>

In other words, within hermeneutics the multiplicity of meaning is not discussed in the realm of language but in-between language and reality outside language, "...at the hinge between linguistics and nonlinguistics, between language and lived experience (of whatever kind)."<sup>22</sup> Texts, in Ricoeur's hermeneutics the main carriers of meaning, refer to a unity of events, persons, institutions, etc., taken together as "...an entire 'economy', an entire signifying whole..."<sup>23</sup> The multiplicity of meaning within this unity is opened up and revealed within several sorts of hermeneutics. In both Freudian and religious hermeneutics, 'archaeological' and 'teleological' interpretation,<sup>24</sup> the opening of language towards the equivocality of reality belongs to the core of hermeneutical interpretation:

I will venture to summarize this in a few words: the sole philosophical interest in symbolism is that it reveals, by its structure of double meaning, the equivocality of being: 'Being speaks in many ways.' Symbolism's *raison d'être* is to open the multiplicity of meaning to the equivocality of Being.<sup>25</sup>

On the level of hermeneutics we thus find a paradox that mirrors the paradox of boundlessness and restriction on the level of semantics. In semantics, according to Ricoeur, within the closed system of language the process of meaning expansion is unlimited, but finds its restriction when the system is opened up in the application of language in speech and writing. In hermeneutics, the multiplicity of signification is released in many directions, but always in a process of revelation of meaning, within the unity of being: this unity is an 'economy' and a signifying whole that includes ambiguity and equivocality – the 'equivocality of Being'. The two paradoxes, in short: there is infinity of meaning extension in a closed system and finitude of meaning in the open universe of hermeneutics. In the previous section we saw that it is unclear how infinity can appear in a closed system. Now we will see that it also remains unclear how unity and equivocality can go together.

This combination of ambivalence and unity has been discussed by Ricoeur in other texts in terms of 'horizon'. In several books he follows Hans-Georg Gadamer's usage of the metaphorical notions of 'horizon' and 'fusion of horizons'. The horizon is that which lends unity and coherence to the contexts in which phenomena appear to us, as well as to the contexts within which texts and other expressions develop their meaning. When we interpret a text, we find our starting point in a linguistic, historical and cultural horizon that structures beforehand our expectations of the text. On the one hand, this horizon limits the possible significations of the text: it cannot mean everything at the same time. On the other hand, this limit is very flexible and open; it changes in the course of interpretation, which is a dialogue of horizons. Horizons always move with us, they can never be exactly fixed and located. A horizon can be compared with a threshold that delimits and shows an openness to its outside at the same time. Moreover, for Gadamer a horizon is always a coherence we share with others, it is a greater whole to which we already belong. In *Wahrheit und Methode*, Gadamer usually emphasizes the Hegelian moment of unity and coherence, albeit always within a Heideggerian world of finitude and historicity.<sup>26</sup>

Ricoeur almost entirely agrees with Gadamer's view on the horizons of interpretation. He often adds his own nuances in the application of this metaphor by speaking of a 'horizon of expectation'. In *Temps et récit* Ricoeur adopts the terminology of the German historian Reinhard Koselleck who speaks of a 'space of experience' (*Erwartungsraum, espace d'expérience*) and 'horizon of expectation' (*Erwartungshorizont, horizon d'attente*).<sup>27</sup> The expectation with which we start an interpretation is the orientation that guides the interpretation,

without completely determining it, including the possibility of a radical change of the expectation. Horizons change in their fusion. These changes cannot be controlled, but they are also not completely without direction. 'Horizon' thus stands for the combination of coherence and openness, unity and ambivalence, guidance and free imagination. According to Ricœur the theory of fusion of horizons finds the right balance between fixed objectivity and absolute understanding, as well as between Hegelian absolutism and a Nietzschean "radical pluralism".<sup>28</sup> The fusion of horizons neither leads to being incommunicado nor to absolute knowledge.

We exist neither in closed horizons nor within a horizon that is unique. [...] The very word *horizon* indicates an ultimate repudiation of the idea of a knowledge wherein the fusion of horizons would itself be grasped.<sup>29</sup>

In short, our interpretations find their way in horizons that move with us, that provide coherence to our understanding, that cannot be controlled or localized, that are open to new perspectives and that are receptive for ambiguities. But how can the ambiguities and the indeterminacy of the horizon go together with the certainty that there is or has to be unity and coherence? Is there also a possible equivocality or multiplicity of meanings that cannot be understood as appearing within a coherent unity? An ambiguity that withstands an ultimate coherence? According to Ricœur, this would lead to a complete loss of meaning, to a dissemination that needs to be avoided. Ricœur usually steers a middle course between two extremes. For Ricœur, dissemination, a term he hardly uses, is an excess that one should try to avoid.<sup>30</sup>

The tension between unity and diversity is a recurrent theme in Ricœur's work. Let me give two different examples. In *Temps et récit* he speaks of the narrative unity of stories as a coherence that can take together incoherent elements within what he calls a 'discordant concordance'. A reader can be surprised by an unexpected switch in the story, but this change cannot be too strange in order to let the reader still be able to 'follow the story'. Ricœur tries to avoid here both a loss of understanding in chaos and a too rigorous format of consistency. But how can the balance between these two be justified? Is there necessarily a unity to be found in stories? If this unity is to be thought as a regulative idea, how can this idea be legitimized?

In Ricœur's theory, stories are prepared, construed and applied in three steps of *mineis*, three modes of figuration: prefiguration, configuration and refiguration. The constellation of 'discordant concordance' takes place in the emplotment of configuration. In order to question his theory to the limit, Ricœur also mentions an 'anti-novel' that seems to challenge the idea of unity and configuration, i.e., James Joyce's *Ulysses*. He even mentions here the possibility to regard the emplotment of this novel as a 'defiguring'.

Indeed, it consists of holes, lacunae, zones of indetermination, which, as in Joyce's *Ulysses*, challenge the reader's capacity to configure what the author seems to take malicious delight in

defiguring. In such an extreme case, it is the reader, almost abandoned by the work, who carries the burden of emplotment.<sup>31</sup>

But this is an exception that does not stop Ricœur from stating that configuration is a constructive feature of narration as such. One might wonder here, whether defiguration should not be taken as a serious alternative for configuration, and whether this suggestion fits into the notion of horizon as a unity including ambivalence.<sup>32</sup>

Another example can be found in *Soi-même comme un autre*, when Ricœur discusses at length the question whether personal identity as the unity of an entire life can be found within narratives. According to Ricœur, narratives are the only way to deal with the question of personal identity. In the introduction of his book, Ricœur is very clear about the relation between polysemy and dissemination. Since the question of personal identity is in itself already many-sided, Ricœur speaks of a polysemy of 'who?', that leads to the fragmentary character of his book, dividing it in different studies on various aspects of the question 'who?'.

In introducing the problematic of the self by the question 'who?', we have in the same stroke opened the way for the genuine polysemy inherent in the question itself: Who is speaking of what? Who does what? About whom and about what does one construct a narrative? Who is morally responsible for what? These are but so many different ways in which 'who?' is stated. [...] This fragmentation, however, has a thematic unity that keeps it from the dissemination that would lead the discourse back to silence.<sup>33</sup>

Thus polysemy leads to a fragmentation that is moderated by a 'thematic unity' and withheld from dissemination into meaninglessness. Whether Ricœur has succeeded in avoiding dissemination by finding this thematic unity in the construction of his book, I leave aside here. The polysemy he refers to does not only affect the edifice of his book, but also the question of personal identity itself. Do narratives always provide unity to self-understanding, or can we also lose ourselves in the fragmentation of many stories and story lines? One of the questions in this regard considers whether literary stories are not too different from our actual life histories to provide them with unity. In the sixth study, Ricœur discusses four problems with regard to the application of fictive stories in real life; he first mentions the problems one by one, and then tries to answer them.<sup>34</sup> The second problem consists in the fact that fictive stories have a beginning and an end, whereas our experiences of our own life do not have such a clear beginning and end. To this problem, Ricœur briefly adds another one:

Along the known path of my life, I can trace out a number of itineraries, weave several plots; in short, I can recount several stories, to the extent that to each there lacks that 'sense of an ending'...<sup>35</sup>

In fact, Ricœur brings to the fore a double problem: not only do not all of the several plots of my life story have a clear ending that gives them a coherence; one can also ask if these several story lines can and need to be taken together

in a determinable unity of one life story. But in his efforts to provide answers to the problems he has listed here, this question that was added to the second problem, finds no answer. The question of the unity of narrative identity is thus left open and is understood by Ricœur first of all as an ethical assignment.

The same tension comes to the fore when Ricœur distinguishes several levels of unity within a narrative: the levels of acts, practices, life plans and unity of an entire life. He criticizes Alasdair MacIntyre for too easily accepting the unity of life in a biography. In *Soi-même comme un autre* it remains an open question for Ricœur whether several life plans (career, love life, family life, etc.) can be united in the employment of one biography.<sup>36</sup> In general one can say that, according to Ricœur, the unity of one's personal identity is an ethical task that can never be completely fulfilled.

In conclusion, according to Ricœur, the polysemy of words in language systems is the sedimentation of the variety and change of meaning that is established in language use and that finds its fragile coherence in an insecure and moving horizon. The infinity of meaning expansion within closed language systems, as well as the finite unity and coherence of meaning produce unsolved tensions in Ricœur's philosophy. Ricœur prefers to emphasize the 'positive' side of disclosure and imagination that unites heterogeneous elements inside an ever changing horizon and thus tries to avoid the diversion and loss of meaning by dissemination.

#### *Derrida on polysemy and dissemination*

Derrida brings the notions of polysemy and dissemination into play in a very different way. He treats them on many occasions as an opposition. Polysemy is taken as the element of a philosophical effort to understand, whereas dissemination is a force or movement that withdraws from this understanding and interrupts it. In 'Tympan', the introductory text of *Marges de la philosophie*, philosophical understanding is characterized by Derrida as an attempt to dominate and control its object. This domination treats its own limit as a being and as something of its own. Philosophy, according to Derrida, is "...the infinite mastery that the agency of Being (and of the) proper seems to assure it; this mastery permits it to interiorize every limit as *being* and as being its own *proper*."<sup>37</sup> After having distinguished two types of this domination, hierarchy and surrounding, he writes that both types function as a circle: "they both follow the movement of the same wheel, whether it is a question, finally, of Heidegger's hermeneutical circle or of Hegel's ontotheological circle."<sup>38</sup> In Derrida's view, both circles are exponents of logocentrism.<sup>39</sup> Of course, Derrida is well aware of the differences between hermeneutics and Hegelian dialectics, but he underlines their familiarity as movements of understanding that try to grasp and seize their objects, even to grasp all of Being. Derrida sees polysemy as part of this circular movement. In his view, the hermeneutic horizon is a

circle of enclosure that maintains multiplicity and variation within a meaningful coherence. Polysemy, Derrida writes in *La dissemination*,

always puts out its multiplicities and variations within the *horizon*, at least, of some integral reading which contains no absolute rift, no senseless deviation – the horizon of the final parousia of a meaning at last deciphered, revealed, made present in the rich collection of its determinations. [...] All the moments of polysemy are, as the word implies, moments of meaning.<sup>40</sup>

Even if it is conceded that complete understanding can never be reached – as is clearly the case in Ricœur's approach of the multiplicity of meaning – then still the horizon functions at least as an effort and as a promise of total comprehension and assured presence of meaning in clear coherence:

Polysemy, as such, is organized within the implicit horizon of a unitary resumption of meaning, that is, within the horizon of a [...] teleological and totalizing dialectics that at a given moment, however far off, must permit the reassemblage of the totality of a text into the truth of its meaning...<sup>41</sup>

In Derrida's point of view, polysemy thus suggests that the multi-interpretability of texts can be kept under control, since the versatility of language is limited by a gathering of meaning within a semantic and hermeneutic horizon. This notion of horizon here clearly has a different meaning than it has in Ricœur. For Derrida, the horizon functions as the means of a "teleological and totalizing dialectics". This usage of the metaphor of horizon has a Husserlian origin and can be found in the first texts that the young Derrida wrote in the 1950s and '60s. In his dissertation, *Le problème de la genèse dans la philosophie de Husserl*, Derrida shows how the later Husserl, while elaborating on genetic phenomenology, had to deal with the problem of the origin and historical development of scientific knowledge. This knowledge presupposes the life-world as the ultimate background of any judgment and ideal object, as "the horizon of all possible substrates of judgments."<sup>42</sup> This world is in itself not 'worldly', it is not constituted, but the presupposition of every constitution, it is an *a priori* world and horizon, "the idea of an infinite totality of possible foundations of every judgment."<sup>43</sup> In his introduction to Husserl's *Origin of Geometry*, Derrida explains how Husserl needs to understand this infinite teleological horizon as an *a priori* Kantian Idea, as a regulative idea that preserves an openness for new theoretical determinations.<sup>44</sup> In addition, he describes the teleological horizon of scientific and theoretical knowledge as part of an even broader horizon of a linguistic community, of humanity in general and of an "infinite determinability of being in general, [...] the ultimate horizon for every theoretical attitude and for all philosophy."<sup>45</sup> This horizon, however, is, according to Derrida, less general and neutral than it seems to be: "Within the horizon of this consciousness of fellow mankind, it is 'mature, normal' mankind that is 'privileged', both 'as the horizon of civilization and as the linguistic community'.<sup>46</sup> In Derrida's reading this implies "...the index of an ideal normativity which is *on the horizon* of de facto normal adults."<sup>47</sup> Comparably,



the horizon of a linguistic community is one in which normal adults find a unity of understanding, "... whose unity would always furnish the ultimate arbitration of every *misunderstanding*."<sup>48</sup> But one might ask where the normative distinction between normal and abnormal reading, between understanding and misunderstanding, comes from. If the ultimate possibility for communication is "... a kind of inaccessible infra-ideal", Derrida adds, "can we not say, then, just the opposite of what Husserl said? Are not non-communication and misunderstanding the very horizon of culture and language?"<sup>49</sup>

In Derrida's interpretation, the notion of horizon is decisive for Husserl's phenomenology. He summarizes Husserl's use of this notion as follows:

We are clearly dealing with a primordial knowledge concerning the totality of possible historical experiences. Horizon is the always-already-there of a future which keeps the indeterminacy of its infinite openness intact. [...] As the structural determination of every material indeterminacy, a horizon is always virtually present in every experience; for it is at once the unity and the incompletion for that experience – the anticipated unity in every incompletion. The notion of horizon converts the abstract condition of possibility of criticism into the concrete infinite potentiality secretly presupposed therein. The notion of horizon thus makes the a priori and the teleological coincide.<sup>50</sup>

Thus, in Derrida's early writings on Husserl we see the development of a concept of the horizon that is different from the hermeneutic view of the horizon: it is taken as a normative regulative idea that determines a presupposed unity.<sup>51</sup> Polysemy, in Derrida's view, is an effort to keep the many meanings of a word or utterance within such a regulative unity of a horizon.

Dissemination is explicitly brought to the fore by Derrida as an opposition and alternative to polysemy.<sup>52</sup> It is the force of writing that undermines this attempt to keep meaning within a horizon:

Dissemination, on the contrary, in order to produce a non-finite number of semantic effects, can be led back neither to a present of simple origin [...] nor to an eschatological presence. It marks an irreducible and *generative* multiplicity. The supplement and the turbulence of a certain lack fracture the limit of the text, forbidding an exhaustive and closed formalization of it, or at least a saturating taxonomy of its themes, its signified, its meanings.<sup>53</sup>

Dissemination is the process of expansion of meaning that breaks through the horizon that was supposed to keep it within bounds. Dissemination fractures the limits of the text, "... the force and form of its disruption *explode* [*crève*] the semantic horizon."<sup>54</sup> As a consequence of its effects, dissemination cannot be defined clearly. A proper definition of dissemination would be a *contradictio in terminis*. The notion of dissemination can be placed in the line of Derridean quasi-concepts, like *différance*, hymen, supplement, writing, *pharmakon*, etc.<sup>55</sup> On the one hand, they can be described and thematized, although not in a fixed definition, on the other hand, their effects and consequences are variable and unpredictable. There is a tension within these quasi-concepts, by which they never stand on their own, but are related to what they deny. The spreading out of meaning by dissemination can only be thought in relation to the attempt to comprehend, as a withdrawal from understanding.

Dissemination is at work on both the level of words and the level of texts. Every sign has the force to break with its context and to break through semantic and hermeneutic horizons.<sup>56</sup> There is no inherent limit to the infinite range of meanings that a word may have. But that does not mean that it could work outside of any context. In 'Signature événement contexte', and also in his discussion with John Searle on this text, in *Limited Inc.*, Derrida uses the term *iterability* to discuss the possibility of a finite and relatively stable meaning that a word or an utterance has within a context. In *iterability* repetition and otherness always go together. The ideality of judgments and ideal objects, which Husserl was looking for, implies a repetition of the word that refers to it. Such a repetition takes place in a change of context, and this again implies a possible difference of meaning. The possibility of meaning change is necessarily and structurally linked with repetition. This is also why a possibility of misunderstanding is structurally inscribed in any communication. Derrida's perhaps most famous diction testifies of this possibility: "Il n'y a pas de hors texte". According to Derrida, this means "nothing else [sic!]: there is nothing outside context," which refers to an "incessant movement of recontextualization"<sup>57</sup> but has nevertheless led to grave misunderstandings. In short, iterability includes both the relative stability of meaning within contexts and the possibility of dissemination, the structural risk of becoming unstable:

the unique character of this structure of iterability [...] lies in the fact that, comprising identity and difference, repetition and alteration, etc., it renders the project of idealization possible without lending 'itself' to any pure, simple, and idealizable conceptualization.<sup>58</sup>

Dissemination thus is the destabilizing factor that nevertheless partakes in making contextual meaning and thus repeatable theoretical knowledge possible. It works as the withdrawal from understanding that, as a possibility, is structurally inscribed in every process of understanding. This withdrawal can have different effects, expansion as well as loss of meaning:

The seminal [...] disseminates itself without ever having *been* itself and without coming back to itself. Its very engagement in division, its involvement in its own multiplication, which is always carried out at a loss and unto death, is what constitutes it as such in its living proliferation.<sup>59</sup>

The limitless lively proliferation probably also results in loss of meaning and death. In a crucial passage on the notion of *différance*, Derrida combines several tensions of difference and dissemination: the circular movement of thought and its interruptions, as well as the different effects of these interruptions:

How are we to think *simultaneously*, on the one hand, *différance* as the economic detour, which, in the element of the same, always aims at coming back to the pleasure or the presence that have been deferred by (conscious or unconscious) calculation, and on the other hand, *différance* as the relation to the impossible presence, as expenditure without reserve, as irreparable loss of presence, irreversible attrition of energy, even as death instinct, and as relation to the entirely other, apparently interrupting every economy?<sup>60</sup>

In these last two quotations we see several different consequences of the disseminative work of *différance*: lively proliferation of meaning, expenditure, loss, attrition, death, and a relation to the wholly other. Before we take a closer look at these effects, let me resume the agreements and differences between Ricœur and Derrida with regard to the multiplicity of meaning.

To start with the agreement: both try to describe the tension between coherence and fragmentation, unity and multiplicity of meaning. But there are many differences in their characterization of this tension. Ricœur looks for coherence instead of chaos; Derrida emphasizes free dispersal of meaning above domination. Ricœur describes polysemy as a feature of language systems, whereas Derrida discusses it as a strategy of comprehension. Ricœur locates polysemy on the level of lexical semantics; Derrida discerns polysemy in semantics as well as in hermeneutics.

Ricœur speaks of the closed system of signs in linguistics and the open universe of signs in hermeneutics. On the one hand, he regards polysemy as the projection of changes by language use within the linguistic system. On the other hand, a process of expansion of meaning originates within language "to the point of a surplus charge of meaning (overload)",<sup>61</sup> that is limited and regulated by semantic fields and contexts of language use, and thus protects polysemy from becoming dissemination.

Derrida underscores the limitless proliferation of meaning in dissemination – which also leads to an overload and a loss of meaning. He is suspicious of polysemy, which he regards as a strategy to regulate and master the spreading of meaning within a totalizing dialectics and a regulative horizon. Whereas Ricœur regards the horizon as a lively, moving and open border, Derrida speaks of the horizon as a surrounding and controlling border that is ruptured by dissemination. From Ricœur's point of view, the idea of breaking through a horizon is hard to understand. A horizon can never be broken, because it cannot be fixed, it cannot even be localized, and it is certainly not a tool of domination. This is what distinguishes the notion of horizon from a Hegelian endeavor to control the limits of reason by reason itself – in Derrida's terms: the "mastery" that permits philosophy "...to interiorize every limit as *being* and as being its own *proper*."<sup>62</sup> According to Derrida, the hermeneutic horizon is a weakened and provisional version of this Hegelian totalizing circle, it functions as a regulative Kantian Idea. From a hermeneutic point of view, however, the horizon is radically different from this Hegelian domination, for it is an indeterminate condition that shapes us instead of being governed by us as a device of understanding and control.

### Effects of dissemination

But how exactly does dissemination work? In what way can it produce the effects that Derrida has mentioned in the quotations above? As we have seen,

dissemination cannot exactly be defined. Nor is it a clear method that can predict its outcomes. Although these outcomes are unpredictable, the course of the development of meaning can be followed: "We here note a point/lack of method [*point de méthode*]: this does not rule out a certain marching order [*marche à suivre*]."<sup>63</sup> In this section, I shall trace and follow several possible developments of the disintegrating movements of dissemination: proliferation or dispersal of meaning; death or loss of meaning; attrition or wearing out of meaning; meaning in relation to the radical other. The questions I try to answer are: How exactly does dissemination work? How do these phenomena of dissemination relate to the notion of horizon? I will also try to limit these descriptions to linguistic phenomena.

#### 1. Dispersal

The literal meaning of dissemination refers to the spreading out of meaning, with a potential of radical change. Since words and utterances are dependent on contexts for their functioning, a new context can raise new meanings of a specific word. In the course of time, a word or a phrase can even receive entirely new meanings that could not have been foreseen by its author or users. Some familiar examples are 'subject', 'art' and 'postmodern'.

These changes take place through the solving of misunderstandings, through the development of new theories, through ingenuity, through a free play with language, and so on. When we try to trace these changes historically, we can follow them step by step. A philosophical text, e.g., can, according to Gadamer, give us an idea about the linguistic need (*Sprachnot*) that the author must have had, when she suffered to articulate a new idea or an innovating theory. This linguistic need leads to linguistic inventiveness (*Sprachfindung*).<sup>64</sup> In this way completely new words can be invented or new metaphors that may give old words new meanings.

Another example can be found in misunderstandings with regard to the meaning of a terminology or of whole theories. Even entire lines of thought can develop out of copy mistakes or interpretation mistakes. 'Il n'y a pas dehors texte' and 'deconstruction' are good examples in this regard. All these changes, however, can be traced and reconstructed by conceptual history.

Also in other domains than science and philosophy such linguistic inventiveness takes place, e.g., in multicultural societies where the youth in the street mixes several languages and dialects; and also in digital telecommunication unexpected linguistic innovations can occur by mobile phone messages or chatting.

Finally, we might also think of a dispersal of meaning that Ricœur refers to in terms of surplus charge or overload. This happens when an expression or a symbol can refer to so many things at the same time that may even contradict each other, that it becomes too vague to have a clear meaning.



The question now is: is this polysemy or dissemination – and in which meaning of these terms? Do these changes stay stable and caught within an already deciphered and controlled coherence of a horizon in the meaning Derrida gives to this metaphor? Or can we trace a break or interruption in such a horizon by which something absolutely new could flourish? I think that in all the cases I just mentioned, we can neither speak of a controlled process nor of a breakthrough that bursts a pre-given horizon. Step by step adages, utterances and new meanings can be added or changed, horizons of speech and writing are moved and broadened, new horizons can be discovered – and every time our horizons move with us.

#### ii. *Loss*

When can we speak of a loss of meaning? Every expression has several possible meanings. The interpreter has to make a choice out of these possibilities. In every interpretation, therefore, specific parts of the content or performance will be laid open, discovered, while other parts will be neglected, forgotten, covered up. The disclosure (*Enthüllung*) always relates to a concealing (*Verhüllung*) as its counterpart. We might call this the loss of a possible understanding. But this potential interpretation might as well, one day, come to the fore in an unexpected and original reading – like a book that has not been read for decades and just stands on the bookshelf, covered with a thick layer of dust, but can still be rediscovered and read. Perhaps we should not speak of a loss of meaning in this case.

But books or artworks can also be really lost, e.g., when a library or museum is burned. Sometimes the remembrance remains of a text that once existed, e.g., the lost parts of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*. Other works, however, can be completely forgotten a long time after their loss, just like historical events, stories and people. Of course, it is not possible to give examples here.

When such a meaning or such knowledge gets lost, it disappears behind the horizon. We leave it behind, while our lives and history move on. It is hard to see, however, how a horizon could be broken or interrupted here. In the quotation I just gave of 'La différance', Derrida writes of the unavoidable risk or possibility of a loss of meaning that cannot be secured by an economic calculation. Such an absolute calculation, however, is not at all searched for or presupposed in the hermeneutic circle.

#### iii. *Attrition*

It is possible that a linguistic sense can be worn out. The specific, personal or cultural value of an utterance can disappear in a slow process of wearing out. What once was an innovating and surprising utterance can slowly, or sometimes even fast, change into a cliché. Living metaphors turn into dead metaphors and concepts.

These alterations take place in historical developments that can be traced and reconstructed by conceptual historiography. They all take place in moving horizons. I can even go further and suggest that what is worn out has become part of the horizon. New phenomena have a central place in our field of vision. What is well known has become evident; one hardly perceives it anymore. The evident and the worn out belong to our background and horizon. Wear and tear in this sense is even the opposite of an interruption of horizons, it is part of the constitution of horizons.

#### iv. *Radical otherness*

According to Derrida, *différance* relates us to the entirely other that cannot be contained within a horizon. In terms of language, radical otherness can be discussed as the ineffable. We have an experience of ineffability when we cannot find the language to describe an experience. It can be a negative as well as a positive experience: one can be indescribably happy, but also inexpressibly sad. In any case, language falls too short.

It is possible to discern a scale of the unspeakable. There are phenomena for which we cannot find the right words, but that can be described with a few sentences instead of one word. There are experiences we cannot describe well, but from which we can sketch a figure, with the help of an evocative style and imagination. And there can be experiences that cannot be mentioned, that leave us speechless, experiences that make any language simply fail.

What can always be uttered, however, is the ineffability itself. What is entirely ineffable always shows itself indirectly, as ineffable. This indirect appearing can become a way to do justice, at least partly, to otherness. The other manifests itself as other, as different, within our world and horizon, as other, maybe as completely other, perhaps even as ineffable, but then, still, it manifests itself within the context of our horizon. When the otherness of the other does not appear, but withdraws from our world, beyond our horizon, it does not break the horizon, but appears in the world as entirely different.

But what if I have a very traumatic experience, when I am, e.g., completely ruined? Then I can have the experience that 'my world falls apart'. Maybe this is a way we can speak of a breaking of horizons. But even then, this falling apart can only appear against the background of a greater horizon, the horizon of worldliness as such. The world as horizon of all horizons can never be broken or interrupted. Perhaps here we can have an impression of what Ricoeur means when he writes that the multiplicity of meaning reveals the 'equivocalness of Being'. What is broken through here, are fixed patterns and procedures, our allegedly self-evident world/view has collapsed – and then we experience the ineffability of the horizon of horizons: the fact that the world appears to us as a unity that cannot be surveyed, that cannot be defined – and that also cannot be understood as the unity of a teleological Kantian Idea. The lack of language

that we experience here appears within the search for the right words. We stumble and stammer, but on a later occasion we might articulate very well how we could not find the words to express our feelings. In short, the experience of a loss of world cannot but appear within a world; the ineffable can always be expressed as ineffable. Otherness appears as otherness within a horizon.

### *The forgotten umbrella*

A final example forms the opposite of something ineffable: it is a singular phrase that seems to resist a suitable interpretation. In *Spurs*, Derrida criticizes Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche as an appropriation that deprives Nietzsche's oeuvre of its heterogeneity and many-sidedness. At the end of his text, Derrida quotes an isolated phrase that was found in Nietzsche's posthumous notes, "Ich habe meinen Regenschirm vergessen". We can never be sure, Derrida argues, what Nietzsche wanted to say with these words. He gives a number of proposals, including a Freudian reading, but mainly to show the lack of a final interpretation. This lack of a definite interpretation "would withdraw it from any assured horizon of a hermeneutic question."<sup>65</sup> Reading this phrase – "For this text is readable. [...] Everyone knows what «I have forgotten my umbrella» means".<sup>66</sup> – comes down to puncturing the horizon of the veil-makers, the *Schleiermacher*s, the hermeneuticians that make horizons like veils.<sup>67</sup>

Once more it is clear in these quotations that Derrida sketches the hermeneutic horizon as an effort of domination, as a strategy that is looking for absolute certainty. This suggestion, however, is doubly wrong. From a hermeneutic point of view, the horizon is neither something that is made as part of a strategy, nor aiming at absolute certainty. The abundance of possible meanings would only be a problem for a hermeneutic approach if this approach would be searching for an ultimate meaning beyond any discussion – but that is not the case.

In all these examples, it appears that dissemination does not break horizons. Nor do the given examples show us a polysemy that keeps all varieties of meaning within a strict border. The dissemination Derrida tries to thematize can be better understood if we adopt a more hermeneutical notion of horizon. Although Ricoeur speaks of a 'regulated polysemy', his notion of horizon differs from a Husserlian-Kantian Idea. On the other hand, the examples of dispursal, loss, attrition and otherness also show that the hermeneutical circle is not only a condition for unity and coherence, but also a condition for lack and loss of coherence, for tension and multiplicity.

### *Conclusions*

Many similarities can be found in the reflections of Ricoeur and Derrida on the versatility of meaning in language. In both we can see how language use

results in relatively stable, though uncontrollable, significations. Nevertheless, usually the differences of their approaches are stressed. Ricoeur emphasizes the limits and coherence that keep polysemy within bounds. Paradoxically, he states that, from a structuralist linguistic point of view, language is a closed system that nevertheless can develop an infinite range of meanings, whereas hermeneutics is described as the open realm of language use that limits the proliferation of meaning by the contexts and horizons in which it functions, thus preventing dissemination. Accordingly, polysemy is the sedimentation of many-sided language use, operating within the equivocality of Being.

Derrida describes polysemy as a strategy for unity by use of the hermeneutic circle, and dissemination as an interruption of this strategy, by breaking through or even exploding horizons. His descriptions of these interruptions, however, are much more in line with a hermeneutical understanding of the horizon as an open and flexible border, always already beyond our reach, than with the horizon as a means of domination and control or as a regulative Idea. The hermeneutical horizon is neither a tool for domination nor a supposedly guarantee for a fixed understanding.

On the other hand, Derrida's underlining of phenomena like attrition and loss unveils possibilities within a hermeneutic approach that are too often neglected or avoided by Ricoeur. Dissemination is the radical version of polysemy that results in unexpected and far-reaching developments of signification, operating within open and moving horizons that always already comprise us. The notion of dissemination, therefore, is not so much a refutation as an enrichment of a hermeneutic understanding of interpretation.

Faculty of Philosophy  
University of Groningen

### **References**

1. I would like to thank Kalpana Seshadri and several of her Boston College colleagues, as well as an anonymous reviewer of the JBSP, for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this article.
2. One can express this difference as 'two faces of Socrates', i.e., dialogue and critical questioning, as James Rissler has done in his comparison of Gadamer and Derrida; cf. James Rissler, *Hermeneutics and the Voice of the Other: Re-reading Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997, 169-72. One can also distinguish between fruitful imagination in language versus change and the unexpected, as Leonard Lawlor has explained the distinction between Ricoeur and Derrida; cf. Leonard Lawlor, *Imagination and Chance. The Difference Between the Thought of Ricoeur and Derrida*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.
3. Paul Ricoeur, 'Le problème du double-sens comme problème herméneutique et comme problème sémantique', in: *Le conflit des interprétations*. Paris: Seuil, 1969, 64-79; transl. by Kathleen McLaughlin as 'The Problem of Double Meaning as Hermeneutic Problem and as Semantic Problem', in: *The Conflict of Interpretations*. London, New York: Continuum, 2004 (1974), 61-76.
4. In this text Ricoeur discusses the three levels in the sequence of increasing "scientific rigor" (p. 69/66): hermeneutics, lexical semantics and structural semantics.

5. Stephen Ullmann, *The Principles of Semantics*. Oxford: Blackwell, Glasgow: Jackson, 1967 (2nd ed., 1957), 114, cf. 62-3.
6. Ullmann, *The Principles of Semantics*, 117.
7. Ullmann, *The Principles of Semantics*, 62.
8. Both Ullmann and Ricœur, when they refer to this characteristic, quote W. M. Urban, *Language and Reality*. London, 1939, 112; cf. Ullmann, *The Principles of Semantics*, 117; Ricœur, 'Le problème du double-sens', 71/68.
9. Ullmann, *The Principles of Semantics*, 119.
10. Ullmann, *The Principles of Semantics*, 174-77.
11. This is my example, not Ricœur's.
12. Paul Ricœur, 'Le problème du double-sens', 70/66-7; I changed the translation, in the original French it is, "car ce sont les changements de sens qui ont leur projection synchronique dans le phénomène de la polysémie."
13. Associative relations of signs show alternative words that can take the same place in a phrase, e.g., the relation horse – cow – animal – etc. Syntagmatic relations of signs are arranged by syntax: signs follow each other within a phrase. In every word of a phrase these two relations cross each other; cf. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, Lausanne: Payot, 1916, 176-86. Roman Jakobson made the same distinction with a different terminology: relations of combination and relations of selection; cf. Roman Jakobson, 'Two aspects of language and two types of aphasic disturbances', in, *On Language*. Cambridge: Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1990, 115-33; 119-20; cf. Ricœur, 'Le problème du double-sens', 71-2/ 68-9.
14. See, e.g., Ricœur, *Le conflit des interprétations*, 31-63, 80-97/27-60, 77-94; idem, *Du texte à l'action. Essais d'herméneutique II*. Paris: Seuil, 1986, 113-32, 153-78; transl. by Kathleen Blamney and John B. Thompson as *From Text to Action. Essays in Hermeneutics II*. London: The Athlone Press, 1991, 75-88, 105-24.
15. Ricœur, 'Le problème du double-sens', 70/67.
16. Josef Trier, *Aufsätze und Vorträge zur Wortfeldtheorie*. The Hague: Mouton, 1973.
17. Ricœur, 'Le problème du double-sens', 72/69.
18. Ricœur, 'Le problème du double-sens', 72-3/69.
19. Ricœur, 'Le problème du double-sens', 73/70.
20. Ricœur, 'Le problème du double-sens', 70/67, my italics.
21. Ricœur, 'Le problème du double-sens', 67/64.
22. Ricœur, 'Le problème du double-sens', 67/64.
23. Ricœur, 'Le problème du double-sens', 66/63.
24. Ricœur, 'Le problème du double-sens', 68/65; cf. Ricœur, *De l'interprétation. Essai sur Freud*. Paris: Seuil, 1965, 440-515; trans. by Denis Savage as *Freud and Philosophy. An Essay on Interpretation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970, 419-93; *Le conflit des interprétations*, 101-207/97-204.
25. Ricœur, 'Le problème du double-sens', 68/65-6.
26. See, e.g., his explanation of the *Wirkungsgeschichte*, history of effect: Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. Tübingen: Mohr, 1990 (1960), 305-12; transl. by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall as *Truth and Method*. London: Continuum, 2nd rev. ed., 2004 (1989), 299-306; cf. Edo Erimk, 'Horizons and Others. Gadamer, Levinas, Patocka', in, *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 84, 4, 2010, 729-48.
27. Ricœur, *Temps et récit III*. Paris: Seuil, 1985, 375-90; trans. by Kathleen Blamney and David Pellauer as *Time and Narrative III*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988, 208-16; cf. Reinhard Koselleck, 'Erfahrungsraum und Erwartungshorizont', in, *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979, 349-75.
28. Ricœur, *Du texte à l'action*, 383-84/282-83.
29. Ricœur, *Du texte à l'action*, 384/282-83.
30. See, e.g., Ricœur, *Du texte à l'action*, 325/238.

31. Ricœur, *Temps et récit I*. Paris: Seuil, 1983, 145-46/ 77; cf. III, 307-8/168-9, where Ricœur even calls this task for the reader an "impossible task".
32. Cf. Gert-Jan van der Heiden, *The Truth (and Untruth) of Language: Heidegger, Ricœur and Derrida on Disclosure and Displacement*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2010, 205-6.
33. Ricœur, *Soi-même comme un autre*. Paris: Seuil, 1990, 31; transl. by Kathleen Blamney as *Oneself as Another*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992, 19.
34. Ricœur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, 188-93/158-63.
35. Ricœur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, 190/161.
36. Ricœur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, 206-11/175-80.
37. Jacques Derrida, 'Tympan', in, *Marges de la philosophie*. Paris: Seuil, 1972, i-xxv; xiv; transl. by Alan Bass as *Margins of Philosophy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985, ix-xxix: xix.
38. Derrida, 'Tympan', xv/xx.
39. Derrida, 'Tympan', xvii/xxi.
40. Derrida, 'La dissémination', in: *La dissémination*. Paris: Seuil, 1972, 319-407: 389; transl. by Barbara Johnson as 'Dissemination', in: *Dissemination*. London, New York: Continuum, 1981 (ed. 2004), 317-401: 384.
41. Derrida, *Positions*. Paris: Minuit, 1972, 62; transl. by Alan Bass as *Positions*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981, 45.
42. Edmund Husserl, *Erfahrung und Urteil. Untersuchungen zur Genealogie der Logik*. Hamburg: Meiner, 1985 (1939), 36; transl. as *Experience and Judgment. Investigations in a Genealogy of Logic*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press 1973, 39; quoted in Derrida, *Le problème de la genèse dans la philosophie de Husserl*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990, 186; transl. as *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003, 109.
43. Derrida, *Le problème de la genèse*, 187/110.
44. Derrida, 'Introduction', in, Edmund Husserl, *L'origine de la géométrie*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962, 147-55; transl. as *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989, 3-171: 134-41; cf. Derrida, *Le problème de la genèse*, 177-283/103-78.
45. Derrida, 'Introduction', 430/55n.
46. Derrida, 'Introduction', 74/79.
47. Derrida, 'Introduction', 75/80.
48. Derrida, 'Introduction', 76/81.
49. Derrida, 'Introduction', 77/81-82.
50. Derrida, 'Introduction', 123/117 [translation slightly changed]; cf. 'Limited Inc a b c...', in, *Limited Inc*. Paris: Galilée, 1990, 61-179: 110-11; transl. as 'Limited Inc a b c...', in, *Limited Inc*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988, 29-110: 56; Postface: Vers une éthique de la discussion', in: *Limited Inc*, 199-285: 218-21, 232-34/ 'Afterword: Toward An Ethic of Discussion', 120-2, 128-9.
51. In Derrida's later work the notion of horizon still plays a prominent role, e.g., in his thoughts on justice and messianism, but I leave that aside in this article.
52. Derrida, 'La double séance', in, *La dissémination*, 199-317: 294, transl. as 'The Double Session', in: *Dissemination*, 269; cf. 'Signature événement contexte', in, *Marges*, 365-93: 376, 386; transl. as 'Signature Event Context', 307-30: 316, 324.
53. Derrida, *Positions*, 62/45 (translation slightly changed).
54. Derrida, *Positions*, 61/45; cf. 'Signature événement contexte', 376/316.
55. Derrida, *Positions*, 61/44; 'Limited Inc a b c...', 135/71.
56. Derrida, *Positions*, 62-63/45-46; 'Signature événement contexte', 377/317.
57. Derrida, 'Vers une éthique de la discussion', 252.
58. Derrida, 'Limited Inc a b c...', 135/71; cf. 88, 95-100, 105, 109-45/44, 47-50, 53, 55-77; 'Vers une éthique de la discussion', 277-82/150-53.

59. Derrida, 'La dissémination', 390/385.
60. Derrida, 'La différance', in: *Marges*, 1-29: 20; transl. as 'Différance', 1-27:19. I changed several details of the translation: the main difference is the translation of *usure* by *attrition* [it might also have been *wear*] instead of *usage*.
61. Ricœur, 'Le problème du double-sens', 70/67.
62. Derrida, 'Tympan', xiv/xix.
63. Derrida, 'La double séance', 303/274.
64. Gadamer, 'Begriffsgeschichte als Philosophie', *Gesammelte Werke* 2, Tübingen: Mohr, 1993, 77-91.
65. Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's styles*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1979, 126-7.
66. Derrida, *Spurs*, 128-9; translation slightly changed.
67. Derrida, *Spurs*, 127.

## CONFLICTING SCENARIOS REGARDING EXISTENTIAL SPATIALITY IN *BEING AND TIME* DIMITRI GINEV

### *1. Introduction*

Since the pioneering paper of Robert Frodeman, published in this Journal, the discussion of Heidegger's concept of existential spatiality gained currency in the 1990s.<sup>1</sup> At stake were issues like the transcendental role played by de-severance (*Ent-fernung*); the phenomenological meaning of directionality; the derivability of spatiality from temporality; the relationship between individual space and public space in Heidegger's notion of environmental region; the extent to which the existential spatiality is independent of the three established philosophical theories of space (Newton's absolute theory, Leibniz's relational theory, and Kant's transcendental-epistemological theory). Progress was also achieved in studying the way in which Heidegger's approach to the ontological priority of existential spatiality over the theoretical concepts of space overtook the Husserlian contradistinction between the life-world's intuitions of space and the formal codification of abstract spaces in modern science.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, the interest in Heidegger's existential spatiality declined in the last decade. A prominent exception, however, deserves mentioning. Theodore Schatzki's (2007) is the first monographic investigation of the spatiality issues in Heidegger's philosophizing before and after the *Keine*.<sup>3</sup> It is quite successful in diagnosing the transformations of the spatiality concept which supervene on Heidegger's farewell to the transcendentially oriented existential analytic. Among Schatzki's significant achievements (with regard to the hermeneutic-phenomenological interpretation of spatiality/space) is the undoing of Heidegger's dichotomous way of opposing the "lived space" (Schatzki's expression) to the objective space. To be sure, there are forms of objective space that do not result from procedures of idealizing objectification. They are instrumental in various spheres of everyday public life. Schatzki is completely right when he states that objective space is seen as something omnipresent (cf. 2007, 48), and that "when humans cope with objective space they need to be aware of it." Yet this observation requires addressing the intermediate forms of space between existential spatiality/space and cognitively objectified space. By implication, one has to elaborate on the whole architectonic of spatiality's problematic in the existential analytic. In refraining from taking into consideration Heidegger's conception of science's existential genesis (including the genesis of the mathematical idealization of space), Schatzki misses the opportunity to address important aspects of this architectonic.